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XXV.

THE TREND OF THOUGHT

IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

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PREFATORY NOTE

The purpose of this lecture is to present in outline the history of a remarkable movement in the thought of our time. It has been felt that this could be best done by endeavouring to state the views and opinions of those who have been its responsible leaders; and, as far as might be, in their own words. To do this with fairness and a right sense of proportion has been the main concern of the lecturer.

The moment for such an attempt seems at last to have arrived. For a long while the observer of what was happening in the world of philosophy has been wont to complain of the confusion which appeared to prevail. He could not, he said, see the wood for the trees. Now it does look as if we might be able to see, not only the wood, but the way through the wood.

If the author can communicate to his readers a share of the pleasure and hope he has derived from his investigations, he will be doubly repaid for his pains.

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AT the conclusion of one of the Reports of the last Lambeth Conference, that of the Committee appointed to consider "Some Movements outside the Church," there is to be found a recommendation which is of more than ordinary interest. It is that attention should be given by "all thinking people" to the study of Philosophy. Such a recommendation from such a quarter is a sign of much.

There was a time, not long since, when a counsel of this kind would hardly have been looked for; partly because the average Englishman was supposed to be quite out of sympathy with philosophy, and partly because philosophy was supposed to be out of sympathy with, if not wholly antagonistic to, religion. To-day the rapid spread of cults like Christian Science and Theosophy has revealed an interest in metaphysics and philosophical problems which was entirely unsuspected. It is to be noted that it was in connexion with these movements that the Bishop's committee made the recommendation to which I have referred; but I do not doubt that the advice was prompted also by a conviction that there has been a change in the temper and tendency of Philosophy itself such as makes it more likely to be a serviceable ally of Religion than it could have been even a little while ago.

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Whether such a change has taken place or not is a matter of no small importance, and I think you will agree that it will be worth our while to consider the point. I hope to be able to show you that there are good reasons for concluding that we shall be right in adopting a very hopeful view of the situation.

It will make for clearness if, at the outset, I tell you what it is I shall mean when I speak of Philosophy. Definitions are difficult and dangerous, so all I will venture upon is a description. Let me say, then, that Philosophy, as I understand it, is the attempt of human reason to attain a coherent view of the universe, and of man's place in it. That is the sense in which I shall employ the word.

Since our subject is to be "The Trend of Thought in Contemporary Philosophy," I shall, of course, do my best to observe the limits implied by the term "contemporary." But I am afraid that I must ask for a measure of indulgence at the start; for, if we are to get a clear idea of the main stream of the philosophical thought of to-day, it would seem inevitable that some reference should be made to the earlier stages through which it has passed on the way to become what it is. I will make this reference as brief as can be.

We shall not, I believe, be guilty of any injustice if we say that the older philosophical systems had one characteristic in common, which was also their characteristic defect. They were too exclusively intellectualist. They took it for granted, that is to say, that philosophy is entirely the business of the critical understanding, and

that it is only concerned with the mind and its conceptions. Accordingly, physical facts counted for little, unless they conformed to speculative theories; and, more serious still, moral values did not come within the ken of the philosopher except in so far as they could be estimated and expressed in terms of logical thought.

This intellectualism was largely a legacy from Aristotle, and it marked the most widely differing schools. St. Thomas, and Descartes, and Locke, and Hume, and even Kant (in spite of the room that he felt himself bound to make for the moral categorical imperative) with their successors right down to Hegel and his Scottish and English interpreters, were all alike agreed in their concession to the claims of the intellect; with the result that philosophy became increasingly abstract and abstruse, and as we should now say "static" in its character.

I do not forget that those who speak thus of the older philosophy have been accused of raising "a bugbear called intellectualism";¹ but I am none the less bold to repeat the assertions which have been often, and as I believe, truly made that the older systems were characterised by Kant's well-known contempt for the appeal to commonsense,² and were out of touch with the deeper facts and experiences of life.

If that older philosophy were still in possession, I think we should have cause, as our predecessors had, to be doubtful as to its value, and as to the light it could shed upon the questions which we feel to be the most vitally important.

(1) DR. BOSANQUET, *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 109.

(2) See e.g. his *Prolegomena*, MAHAFFY & BERNARD'S translation, pp. 6, 140.

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I trust I shall not be thought wanting in respect for the valuable work done for us lately by Bishop Gore, in his book on "Belief in God," if I say that his unhopeful estimate of the worth of philosophy suggests that he is thinking of the philosophy of the Oxford Greats' School of fifty years ago. At that time a brave attempt was made to bring about a reconciliation between the then accepted idealism and the postulates of Christian belief. The subsequent developments of that idealism have produced in many a sense of disappointment and, as they might say, of disillusionment; and we may agree that, if there were no further progress to report, we should have but slight cause to entertain any more favourable expectations. The case is greatly altered if we are able to produce reasons to show that the old intellectualist philosophy of the classical type has undergone changes by which it has been set free from the narrowing and cramping conditions that had fettered and circumscribed it. It is the stages of this emancipation that I am now to describe.

The first of these stages was the reaction towards Materialism. If mind had neglected matter, matter was to have its revenge. Encouraged by the splendid discoveries and ever advancing claims of physical science, the new movement went rapidly forward until it swept like a flood over a large part of the thinking world. Many were attracted by its daring, and seeming simplicity. Its strength depended mainly upon its dogma of the Conservation of Energy, and upon its confident assurance that the order of nature is a fast closed system controlled throughout by unalterable mechanical forces. But

more and more the trustworthiness of these fundamental presuppositions came to be called in question. The further progress of physical science itself, and especially the work of the biologists, cut the ground from under the materialist position. More remarkable still has been the effect of the fuller insight into the constitution of matter. Matter has not only been explained but, as a President of the British Association has said, it has been "explained away." In the light of the latest researches all that can be claimed for it is that it is a function, perhaps we ought to say a mathematical function, of some invisible force. If that be so, we may well ask, with a widely known writer who has recently made a frank renunciation of his former opinions—"How can one hold to materialism, if there is no material!"¹

We do not overlook the great service which the materialists rendered by their insistence upon the closeness of the connexion between the intellectual and the physical when we say that their attempts to identify these, and still more to derive the sense of moral values from any merely material and mechanical processes, have happily proved most conspicuously unsuccessful.

The next stage in the history was that of Agnosticism. It was not easy at the time to perceive that Agnosticism was a great advance upon Materialism, but this was undoubtedly so. While, on the one hand, it was no less decided in its depreciation of the capacity of the intellect as an organ for the attainment of a knowledge of reality, on the other it shrank from a denial of the exist-

(1) ROBERT BLATCHFORD, *Sunday Chronicle*, April 2, 1922.

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ence of the supernatural. Indeed it emphatically asserted the fact of its existence, though at the same time it maintained most dogmatically that we could know nothing at all of its nature. But this latter statement it at once proceeded to qualify, with an inconsistency that was apparent from the first, by alleging that we could none the less be certain of this, that it is not personal.

Agnosticism attained an immense vogue, not only in Europe, America, and Australia, but in India and Japan where it had much to offer that was acceptable to the Oriental mind. At one time it looked as if it might be received as the last word of human wisdom. Now the most surprising thing about it is the fewness of its defenders; and we need not hesitate to say that its chief service has consisted in the way in which it compelled men to enquire whether there are not other faculties in our nature by which we may rise to an apprehension of a reality that is beyond the reach of the intellect alone.

Thus we are brought, after what I fear must have seemed a rather long introduction, to the movement which is now in the full course of its development. We may not as yet be able to agree as to the most fitting designation of it; but I do not think it should be difficult to indicate its general direction and aim. In order to do this, I will ask you to think of the teachers who have been its most representative leaders.

I can feel no hesitation as to the name I ought to place first. My acquaintance with it began just forty years ago. I was reading a lecture by a well-known American exponent of biology and philosophy, and was struck by a

sentence in which he spoke of Hermann Lotze whose star he declared to be "in the ascendant," while that of Herbert Spencer was already "touching the Western pines."¹

It was characteristic of Lotze that he had been well trained in both medicine and philosophy. He had a mind of unusual capacity, and he was a forceful and voluminous writer. Utterly dissatisfied with intellectualism and materialism, he took his stand upon the trustworthiness of human experience; and maintained that it is through this, and this alone, that any knowledge of the universe is possible for us. If I were asked to name the most typical of his utterances, I think I should quote the words at the close of his preface to the *Microcosmus*.

In these he declared that it was his main purpose to show "how absolutely universal is the extent, and at the same time how completely subordinate the significance, of the mission which mechanism has to fulfil in the structure of the world."

He was certain that the facts require us to recognise the presence of a living Infinite; by interaction with which all motion and all thought are rendered possible. He held it inconceivable that this underlying "Substrate" could be "unconscious and blind," or in any degree inferior to that of whose existence it is the cause.² On the other hand, he never tired of protesting against the notion that this fundamental Reality is to be identified with thought.

That this could not be, he was sure if only because, as he said, "the meaning of Being cannot be made in-

(1) JOSEPH COOK, *Biology*, p. 84.

(2) *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 171.

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telligible to him who does not know immediately what it means.”¹ In his view we have to look to the highest forms of reason for the fullest revelation of reality. He did not fear to assert that it is moral life, and the world of Values, which is the true basis even of metaphysics.

But, while he thus emphasised the importance of the intuitional, he was far from denying the necessity for the intellectual. Though “the nature of things,” he said, “does not consist in thoughts, and thinking is not able to grasp it,” and it may be that it is only in other forms that “the whole mind experiences the essential meaning of all being and action,” yet thought has its function to perform as “subsequently serving as an instrument by which that which is thus experienced is brought into the connexion which its nature requires, and is experienced in more intensity in proportion as the mind is master of the connexion.”²

He was convinced that the objections which have been urged against the belief that the Infinite Being is Personal are due to a misconception of the essential conditions of personality. “Perfect Personality,” he was wont to declare in often-quoted words, “is in God alone. To all finite minds there is allotted but a pale copy thereof. The finiteness of the finite is not a producing condition of this personality, but a limit and a hindrance to its development.”³

“The longing of the soul,” he was sure, “cannot be satisfied with any form of good except personality.”⁴

(1) *Microcosmus*, ii, p. 353.

(2) *ibid.* ii, pp. 359 f.

(3) *ibid.* ii, p. 688, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 72.

(4) *Microcosmus*, ii, p. 672.

And he was certain that the highest values of Goodness and Truth and Beauty are meaningless unless we regard them as existing in and for persons. He had no patience with those who questioned the reality of the self. "Among all the errors of the human mind," he said, "it has always seemed to me the strangest that it could come to doubt its own existence of which alone it has direct experience, or to take it at second hand as the product of an external Nature which we know only indirectly, only by means of the knowledge of the very mind to which we would fain deny existence."¹

And, further, he was persuaded that we can set no limits to the continuance and growth of human personality. "The immediate consciousness of our personal reality," he said, "will always remain." "We can never think of ourselves as melting away in the great receptacle of universal Nature without thinking that we shall still be preserved and go on existing in it in our dissolved condition."²

For the mysterious influence of mind upon matter, Lotze accounted by the supposition that all matter is, in some measure, pervaded by an inner mentality; or, as we might more commonly express it at the present time, by the supposition that even the lowest organisms exhibit some traces of a power of psychical activity.³

--I wish it were possible to quote more largely from this master, though I am well aware that no quotations could convey an adequate conception of the wealth of knowledge and thought which he accumulated by his

(1) *ibid.* i, p. 263.

(2) *ibid.* ii, p. iii.

(3) In this he was, in a sense, a follower of Leibniz.

researches into physics, metaphysics, ethics, and religion. Those who know his writings will know how often arguments and conclusions are to be met with in them that are more commonly associated with the names of subsequent thinkers.

Among the outstanding precursors of the modern movement must be mentioned M. Emile Boutroux who, as far back as 1874, published his work on "The Contingency of the Laws of Nature." In it he asserted the incompetency of scientific determinism, and maintained that the human mind has no power of ruling out the possibility of novelty in the course of development. He was one of the pioneers in France of the revival of the religious spirit after 1870, and he prepared the way for successors who boldly proclaimed a philosophy of freedom and action.

It will indeed be strange if it should prove that, as the 19th century was the century of law, the 20th is to be that of miracle! But we must not go on too fast.

Next in order I will put the Cambridge Professor, James Ward. It is a good many years since he did valuable service by his incisive criticism of Naturalism and Agnosticism, and of Psychophysical Parallelism, the strange modern equivalent of the old Occasionalism, which proposed to account for mental and bodily activities as causally unconnected, though invariably associated, events.¹ As against all theories of merely mechanical development, he maintained that throughout the evolutionary process there is a "subjective selection" at work, which implies the presence in organisms of the "rudimentary facts of mind."

(1) *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, GIFFORD LECTURES, 1896-98.

Perhaps his most original contribution has been his demonstration that our knowledge begins, not as Locke and Hume had supposed with separate ideas which we proceed to combine, but with a "continuum," or indefinite whole, within which we gradually make distinctions and recognise relations.¹

Professor Ward has taken his stand decidedly as a "pluralist" in opposition to "monism," or "singularism" as he prefers to call it. He is clear that we cannot dispense with the notions of the "ego" and the freedom of the will; and he believes that we are led of necessity to the conception of a Supreme Individual who is the cause of the existence of other individuals, and is the Subject of universal experience. He will have nothing to do with the notion of an impersonal Absolute. As he puts it—"What can neither do nor suffer, what is nothing for itself, is truly nothing at all."²

Closely linked by sympathy with those of whom I have been speaking was William James the American, whose well-known books have been epoch-marking and in some respects epoch-making. Starting as a teacher of Anatomy and Physiology, he was led on to Psychology and the yet wider problems of Philosophy. He possessed an extraordinary power of arousing the outside world to a perception that the questions with which he was grappling were no dead abstractions, but most vital issues in the lives of men. He soon became known as a stout champion of the facts and values of experience. It may be said that he took the freedom of the will—man's power, that is,

(1) See article "Psychology," *Encycl. Brit.* 9th edition, 1886.

(2) *Pluralism and Theism*, p. 21.

to make a real difference in things by his activities—as the fundamental article of his creed. He maintained a “transmission” theory according to which the brain does not produce thought, but is only the more or less adequate organ and instrument of thinking; and he was an enthusiastic advocate of the powers of the subconscious mind, following in this on the lines marked out by Fechner and Frederick Myers.

His “Pragmatism”—the term he subsequently admitted to have been infelicitously chosen—was a revolt, we may say a boisterous revolt, against a philosophy which could be satisfied to ignore all but the intellectual requirements of human nature. The repugnance with which he regarded all kinds of “monism” was due to his conviction that they necessarily rendered effort illusory.

A hater of the systematic, he was often illogical in the structure and presentation of his opinions; and, in particular, he showed much inconsistency in his accounts of the nature of the soul, the self. But his testimony to the working of the Supernatural in human life was unequivocal. “The further limits of our being,” he held, “plunge into an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely ‘understandable’ world.” “So far as our ideal impulses originate in this region, (and most of them do originate in it, for we find them possessing us in a way for which we cannot articulately account), we belong to it in a more intimate sense than that in which we belong to the visible world.” “When we commune with it, work is actually done upon our finite personality,

for we are turned into new men." "I call this higher part of the universe by the name of God."¹

And, he "certainly believed that the mind of man is not wholly destroyed on the death of the body."²

From William James we pass by a natural transition to M. Bergson in France. He, too, has made an appeal which has reached far beyond the professional thinker, and he has carried even further the revolt against materialism and rationalism. Like Professor James, he is an ardent believer in freedom; and he will not hear of restricting it within the limits of humanity. No living being, he maintains, is wholly incapable of spontaneous movements. For him these movements are the signs and effects of the onward sweep of a creative vital impulse which, after being continually crossed and checked by matter, reveals itself at last in consciousness as intuition and intelligence, and arrives at its highest expression in human personalities. All that we see and know is the outcome of a process of creation *de novo* unceasingly at work.

The intellect in man has been developed for his use and guidance among material objects. It is, therefore, mainly adapted for the understanding of spatial relations and changes. Instinct in human nature has been almost entirely subordinated to intellect; so that it is like a lamp which "glimmers" only now and then. But this occasional manifestation is of very great value, for "it glimmers whenever a vital issue is at stake; on our personality, on our liberty, on the place we occupy in the whole of nature, on our origin, and perhaps on our destiny."³

(1) *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 515 f.

(2) McDougall, *Body and Mind*, p. 198 note.

(3) *Creative Evolution*, p. 268.

M. Bergson tells us not to forget that, "there is infinitely more in a human consciousness than in the corresponding brain."¹

"Consciousness in man," he says, "is unquestionably connected with the brain, but it by no means follows that a brain is indispensable to consciousness."²

From this he is bold to draw a very important deduction. "If the brain does but translate into movements a small part of what takes place in consciousness, then survival becomes so probable that the onus of proof falls on him who denies it rather than on him who affirms it."³ He is most unwilling to believe that the long travail by which personality is won is to end in nothing that can make it worth while. "Shall we not suspect that, in its passage through the matter which it finds here, consciousness is tempering itself like steel, and preparing itself for a more efficient action, an intenser life?"⁴

It has to be admitted that in certain important respects M. Bergson leaves us ill-satisfied. His anti-intellectualism seems often to take him into unjustifiable extremes. His "failure to give any intelligible account of individuality,"⁵ is also a grave defect. And most disappointing of all is his inability to discover anything of the nature of Purpose in the direction of the onward movement of life. This is the more surprising since the conception is always latent, and often scarcely concealed, in his language; and because, as we have seen, he is able to speak with no uncertainty of the ultimate destination of man. But we must be grateful for the assistance he gives us, and that is not small.

(1) *Mind Energy*, p. 41.

(2) *ibid.* p. 7. (3) *ibid.* p. 59.

(4) *ibid.* p. 28.

(5) McDougall, *Body and Mind*, p. 377 note.

Gratitude and justice alike require us to give an honourable place to Rudolf Eucken, the veteran professor of Jena. He has been described as "probably the most influential exponent (from the standpoint of purely secular philosophy) of the claim of the inward spiritual life of man to complete supremacy." He is more strictly a philosopher than those whom we have just been considering. His system of thought is known by the title of "Activism," from its central principle that there is need for man's effective co-operation with a spiritual order which transcends human life, is superior to the mechanism of nature, and is the ultimate basis of reality. "Spiritual life," as he defines it, "is the self-consciousness of reality."¹

He is profoundly conscious of the transcendent values of the personal and the ethical. For each one of us, he maintains, "a genuine self is constituted only by the coming to life of the infinite spiritual world in an independent concentration in the individual."²

Accordingly he has no use for any doctrine that obscures the fact of freedom. "The logical consequence of determinism," he says, "can be nothing less than the destruction of everything which is characteristic of the spiritual and intellectual life." "The complete denial of any ultimate spontaneity is so terrible as to be absolutely intolerable."³

He is sure that in the life-process "new forces come to light," and that "we have been realising only a portion of our being."⁴ He has no doubt that our development

(1) *Life's Basis*, p. 263. (2) *ibid.* p. 186.

(3) *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, pp. 436 f. (4) *ibid.* pp. 262, 442.

is aided by "the complications and contradictions, the manifold signs of incompleteness which we see in the world about us," and even by "the mixture of reason and unreason which it exhibits."¹

He finds no impossibility in the belief that "God is at the same time moral personality and absolute being"; and he refers to St. Augustine as having shown that these conceptions are not incompatible.²

"All opposition to the idea of the Divine Personality is," in his opinion, "ultimately explained by the fact that an energetic life process is wanting."³

His writings contain many most serious warnings as to the responsibilities and perils of the spiritual life. He is painfully sensitive to the tendencies which are secularising and degrading our present-day civilisation. If he does not despair, it is because he perceives that "a deep seated doubt makes itself felt, questioning the anti-religious conclusion"; and because he is convinced that "such a doubt is demonstrably gaining ground."⁴

At this point I think I may most fitly introduce a reference to one whose name should be well known in the North of England—Dr. Theodore Merz of Newcastle. His long life just ended was devoted to science and philosophy. Of his labours in the latter department the four volumes of "The History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century" will stand for an abiding memorial; while, as a summary of his final conclusions, we have his latest volume which he modestly entitled "A Fragment on the Human Mind."

(1) *ibid.* p. 443. (2) *ibid.* p. 413. (3) *Truth of Religion*, p. 430.

(4) *The Spiritual Outlook of Europe To-day* (1922), p. 14.

It is highly significant that Dr. Merz should have reached the conclusion, which he unhesitatingly proclaimed, that the surest path of advance is to be found along the lines of British rather than of Continental philosophy.

Accepting Professor Ward's position that our knowledge begins with the apprehension of a whole which is subsequently differentiated into its parts, he suggested that we should do well to substitute a method of *synopsis*, *analysis*, and *synthesis*, for that of the more familiar Hegelian triad. He insisted that Personality is "the highest category of thought which we possess,"¹ and believed that it is with this that our first acquaintance with reality is made. "It seems almost certain," he said,—and this so far as I am aware was an original suggestion on his part—"that the recognition of a person is the first important step in the clearance of the child's mind and the brightening of its outlook."² To the infant, its mother or its nurse is "the first revelation of what we call the outer world, the not-self."³

"Without the help of other persons, what we know of this outer world would be a very small and incomplete thing, containing many features of which we could not be certain whether they are objective or subjective."⁴

From this first revelation the child's mind is led on to a succession of revelations of the higher values, again in and through persons; and so eventually to the fact of the Supreme Personality.⁵ It is not difficult to see how by the same paths we may be brought to the recognition of that which is "the greatest event in history," the

(1) *A Fragment on the Human Mind*, p. 110. (2) *ibid.* p. 164.

(3) *ibid.* p. 76.

(4) *ibid.* p. 86.

(5) *ibid.* p. 108.

fullest of all our revelations of Reality in the Person of Christ.¹

I should like to have said much more of Dr. Merz's work, but what I have said is enough, I hope, to make it plain that we have had in him a thinker for whose help we have great cause to be thankful.

I am afraid that our limit of time must soon compel me to bring what I am trying to say to a close. Out of the names that I should have been glad to mention I will, therefore, confine myself to two. The first shall be that of one, well-known to us all, who has most worthily maintained the philosophic temper and outlook during an exceptionally arduous career of public service.

The Earl of Balfour, as we must now style him, had for a long time anticipated the course that modern philosophy would take. Many years ago he raised a protesting voice when it was fashionable in certain intellectual circles to assume that our knowledge of reality could never go deeper than the surface of phenomena. He saw clearly that such a view could only lead to a universal scepticism, for in this case, as he said, "religion would be no worse off than science."² From this scepticism he was certain that human nature would recoil, if only because "values refuse to be ignored." As he expressed it, "beauty must be more than an accident. The source of morality must be moral. The source of knowledge must be rational. If this be granted, you rule out Mechanism, you rule out Naturalism, you rule out Agnosticism; and a lofty form of Theism becomes, as I think, inevitable."³

(1) *ibid.* pp. 285, 287.

(2) *Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, p. 319.

(3) *ibid.* p. 250.

He has no notion at taking fright at the threats of the intellectualist. "As a matter of fact," he says, "it is only in the simplest jobs that discursive reason is permitted to have a hand at all."¹

His main contention, as stated again in his latest volume, has been that "commonsense beliefs, and science which is a development of commonsense beliefs, are, if not true, at least on the way to truth."² And, further, he is not in the least afraid of the appeal to Authority. "It is Authority rather than Reason to which in the main we owe, not religion only, but ethics and politics." "It is Authority which supplies us with essential elements in the premises of science."³

For the last of my witnesses I am going much farther afield. Hitherto I have only called those who have been themselves within the movement that we have been examining. It has been indispensable that we should have their evidence. Now, I think, we shall feel that it will be an advantage to hear the verdict of someone who views the whole matter from an external and independent standpoint: indeed that it might be a gain if his feelings towards it are hostile rather than sympathetic.

We shall find what we need in a work that was published about a year ago by Professor Radhakrishnan, now of Calcutta University. Apart from the remarkable ability which it displays, the book has this special value, that it gives us a graphic account of what has been taking place among ourselves as this has appeared to an Eastern thinker, who is also a non-Christian. I shall describe what

(1) *Foundations of Belief*, p. 72.

(2) *Theism and Humanism*, p. 148.

(3) *Foundations of Belief*, p. 229.

he has written, I think, without exaggeration when I say that it is one long lament over that which, as he sees it, has happened and is happening to philosophy here in the West. Let me read you his description of what he regards as the most crucial change.

“The scientific empiricism of the nineteenth century viewed experience as limited to the world in space and time. As it did not believe in the sphere beyond the physical, religion then went to the wall.”¹ “In the last twenty-five years there has been the re-establishment of the presuppositions of religion.” “After a great wave of materialism, agnosticism, and atheism, we see in Europe to-day a revival of the religious spirit.”²

At the dethronement of Materialism he most heartily rejoices. What is to him so distressing is that we were not content to stop at Agnosticism, which might have accorded well with the creed of the Vedas, of which he discourses with much eloquence and passion.

Of the causes that have been operating amongst us he has a clear-sighted understanding. “Distrust of intellect is the characteristic note of recent philosophy.” “Since Hegel, this tendency to reduce thought to a position subordinate to feeling has been growing.”³ What is even more interesting in his diagnosis is the influence he assigns to the two most powerful forces that have been behind the whole movement.

These, in his opinion, have been the forces of Christianity and Democracy, with their insistence upon personality and freedom. That I am rightly representing

(1) *op. cit.* p. 17.

(2) *ibid.* p. 29.

(3) *ibid.* p. 42.

the view he takes, you will see when I tell you that the title which he gives to his volume is "The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy." I am sure you will allow that such a title is extraordinarily significant. It is a title which implies more than perhaps any of us would have dared to assert. I for my part have been content to maintain that there is a Trend of Thought in Contemporary Philosophy; but I hope I have made it clear that I should not differ from the Indian professor as to the direction in which it is moving.¹

I have endeavoured to trace its course through intellectualism, and materialism, and agnosticism, and voluntarism, and pragmatism, and activism. If I were asked what name I myself should be inclined to give to our present stage, I should describe it as that of Transcendental Realism. I do not suppose that our philosophical controversies are yet ended. I am aware that Intellectualism has still its bands of supporters among neo-idealists and neo-realists; but I cannot think that these will cut such channels as can divert the main current of the stream. Difficulties there are, and problems, that will remain till the final solution appears, when

"that in us which thinks with that which feels
"Shall everlastingly be reconciled;
"And that which questioneth with that which kneels."

But I shall have greatly failed in what I have attempted if I have not encouraged you to hope that the movement in the strongest and clearest thought of our day is a movement over which Christian believers have good cause to rejoice.

(1) It is interesting to notice his assertion that "Balfour's thought reveals the complete supremacy of religion in philosophy."—*op. cit.* p. 397.

"If we were forced to believe that all personal life is but a stage of development through which an impersonal Absolute has to pass . . . we could discover no obligation to co-operate in helping on a power totally indifferent both to itself and for us." "We should have to confess that a human heart in all its finitude is incomparably richer and more exalted than that Absolute."

id. *Microcosmus*, ii, p. 164.

"Imperfection has a meaning in the cosmic order."

ibid. ii, p. 476.

"The less we say regarding the universality of the conservation of energy the better, for we do not know."

"What biology seems justified in holding firm to is that there has been a frequent *epigenesis*, or new formation." "It may be very naïve on the biologist's part, but it does not appear likely that any argument that being is a fixed quantity will affect his belief that insects and birds were downright novelties." "Evolution is a series of great inventions."

J. A. THOMPSON, *System of Animate Nature*,
ii, pp. 244, 367.

"Hellenistic reflection did not take sufficient account of the infinite value belonging to human personality . . . that is where it laid itself open to the criticism of Christianity, a criticism which subsequent reflection by degrees assimilated and found justified."

HALDANE, *Reign of Relativity*, p. 260.

"The sinister track on which selfhood is lost."

CALDECOTT, *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 139.

"The denial that there is truly Personality in God must in the end lead to the denial that religious experience is an independent and autonomous form of experience at all." C. J. WEBB, *God and Personality*, pp. 265f.

"The statement in which recent philosophers of very various schools in this country have concurred, that 'God is not the Absolute,' must, I am sure, if taken seriously, make nonsense of Religion." *ibid.* p. 153.

"It is of the nature of personality to be a unity of plurality."

"The theistic hypothesis allows us to conceive the possibility of a perfected intercourse which is all-embracing, including all persons, and which at the same time preserves and perfects their individual being."

W. R. MATTHEWS, *Studies in Christian Philosophy*,
pp. 183, 153.

"To deny the power of the Infinite to limit itself, is to deny the infinity of its power."

SORLEY, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*,
p. 484.

"Reverence may possibly lead the pantheist into the mystic way, but morality is lost on the road."

ibid. p. 399.

"There is more meaning in the world than the orderly connexions which the sciences exhibit."

ibid. p. 287.

"The one purpose which, so far as I can see, justifies the field of havoc through which the world passes to better things is the creation of those values which only free minds can realise. And if free minds when perfected are to pass away, even for absorption in God, then that value is lost."

ibid. p. 515.

"Imperfection is an essential condition of the making of the good man."

"Perfect adaptation would mean automatism."

ibid. ~~pp.~~ 506, 343.

"Confidence in the permanence of values implies a belief in a Power and Will that conserves them."

ibid. p. 172.

"More than any other event in history have the simple yet mysterious beginnings of the Christian dispensation succeeded in raising to the high level of a great Reality those ideals of a moral and spiritual life which in many varied forms appeared in the pre-Christian civilisations without being able to establish themselves as a great world-power. The whole of modern history has been

influenced by the dominating force of this great structure of Christian thought and Christian life. It was subjected to the most virulent attacks in the earlier centuries of our era, and to relentless criticism in more recent times ; it has not fallen, but steadily gained ground."

MERZ, *Fragment on the Human Mind*, p. 268.

"The philosophy, the theory of knowledge, I needed and have achieved is strongly realist in character ; I believe most earnestly that the future also in philosophy proper is away from all scepticisms, subjectivisms, agnosticisms, pragmatisms, to belief in our real knowledge of real objects, distinct from ourselves and from our knowledge of them."

F. VON HÜGEL, Letter to the
Times Literary Supplement, May 25th, 1922.

